

SUGGESTED DRAFT

TO : AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

FROM : SECSTATE WASHDC (EXDIS)

REFS A. SAIGON 16414

B. SAIGON 15745 (EXDIS)

SUBJECT: FIELD STAFFING

1. We appreciate and applaud the effort that clearly ~~was~~ lies behind the prompt submission of Ref A. In ~~a subsequent~~ an early (subsequent) message we will comment in more detail on its concrete proposals. At this stage, however, we would like to exchange some more general thoughts to ensure that we are both working on the same wavelength. To our way of thinking, ~~&~~ determination of function dictates, in turn, an optimum staffing pattern and these together lay down the essential criteria for selecting specific individuals for specific assignments. We therefore want to be sure that the Mission and Washington ~~share~~ ^{Share} a common perception of functional requirements before ~~taking up~~ engaging in any detailed discussion of staffing proposals or actual personnel nominations.

(2)

2. You laid out the essential requirements of the US Mission's post-settlement field operations perceptively and elegantly in Ref B. The concepts ~~app~~ outlined in Ref B dovetailed ~~exactly~~ with most of our thinking save perhaps in one area. While we share the view that field experienced personnel should clearly be employed to the maximum extent feasible in any post-settlement structure, we also believe there may often not be a one-for-one transference ~~of~~ between talents and expertise needed in the ~~FORDS~~ Mission structure developed to meet the requirements of a wartime environment and those that will be needed to meet the requirements of a post-settlement env.

3. ~~By~~ Slightly compressing your well-expressed thoughts, it seems to us that the field components (especially) of any post-settlement US Mission will have two basic tasks:

a. Servicing the US Government's informational needs.

b. Furthering the US Government's political objectives.

c. Implementing and end-use inspecting US ~~aid for~~ assistance programs (Refugee, etc) -

(3)

4. On the informational side, you should be aware of some of the language used in a 10 November study prepared by WSAW Working Group C (Intelligence) and endorsed by the WSAW on 15 November. This language discussed what Working Group C termed "Provincial Information Collection" and reads as follows:

5. It should be clearly recognized that the kind of effort described above is something both distinct and separate from the ~~even~~ clandestine and covert collection activities of OSA field personnel. ~~That~~ What ~~we are~~ have in mind here is an overt monitoring, political reporting task ~~whereas~~ for which OSA is not set up to perform ~~but~~ even though its reporting product will clearly be supplemented by OSA's clandestine reports. We in Washington are clearly going to need running assessments of the provincial environment, comment

(9)

On ~~both sides~~ violations of the Settlement agreement's provisions by both Vietnamese sides, informal observational judgements on the effectiveness of the GVN ~~administration~~ ^{administration} in provincial areas, activities of the NLF, etc. This will require perceptive, linguistically skilled local ^{US} observers who know how to use their eyes and can stay properly plugged in (informally as well as formally) to the ~~local~~ ^{provincial} GVN apparatus.

G. It would seem to us that ^{as a general rule (and certainly allowing for individual exceptions)} the kind of skills and background required for this kind of political monitoring and reporting effort would be more likely to be possessed by young Foreign Service Officers ~~than~~ ^{than} ~~than~~ officers of other Government agencies with somewhat different backgrounds, training and professional orientation. We would envisage this group of field observers reporting, through the consulates, to the Ambassador, his Deputy and what you term his "Special Assistant for Resettlement and Reconstruction".

We would also suggest for your consideration that in this area of ~~reporting~~ ^{reportorial} coverage, an effort be made to retain in some "Vietnamized" or suitably covered form, the capabilities of the Pacification Attitude Analysis System.

(5)

7. On the matter of ~~not~~ ~~not~~ furthering US political objectives, it is certainly our desire -- and in our interests -- to see ~~any~~ ~~from~~ the provisions of any final Settlement agreement honored by all sides. Taking that as a ground-rule-setting given, however, it is also in our interests to see the GUN functioning as ~~efficient~~ efficiently and effectively as possible at the local level to maximize its chances of winning the political struggle. Pursuing ~~and~~ furthering these interests will put great demands on the subtlety, perceptivity skill and sophistication of US officials working at or under the regional consulates.

8. In this context, the handling of reconstruction aid provides one important and obviously delicate example. Suppose there is a bridge to be built over a certain ~~waterway~~ secondary waterway and from a strict engineering standpoint the logical location for that bridge is X. Suppose further, however, that the net ^{actual} effect of putting a ~~not~~ bridge at will be to facilitate the movement of communist terrorists coming out of a base area to harass or pressure a pro-GUN hamlet, whereas putting the bridge at Y ~~is~~ less desirable on engineering

(6)

grounds) will serve to shorten the overland distance to market of ~~and~~ those living in a village evincing pro-GUN sentiments, thus providing a tangible benefit and reward for their political support. We need to

Make certain that those who run our consulates and regional activities ~~are~~ ~~cap~~ have the background and temperament to think in such terms and see such potential ramifications in superficially mundane ~~steps~~ ~~or~~ ~~as~~ technical decisions. We

will of course be required to live up to the terms of any agreement we accept, but we will certainly not be required to act in a way that (however unintentionally) redounds to the GUN's detriment and its adversaries' benefit.

This applies to aid, refugee relief, resettlement and all other post-settlement US activities.

9. Before ~~the~~ discussing Ref A's detailed staffing pattern proposals and personnel nominations, we want to be certain that neither Washington nor the Mission is misreading the other's prose and that both of us are employing the same conceptual framework. We would therefore ^{like to receive} ~~welcome~~ your ~~own~~ comments on the general ideas ~~expressed above~~ ~~expressed above~~ before we comment on Ref A's more concrete aspects.